Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A carrier that can be loaded with an aqueous media comprises a plurality of particles, the particles being made of a porous hydrophobic polymer substrate, wherein the porous hydrophobic polymer substrate is hydrophilised over least part of its entire surface by coating with a surfactant, the entire surface comprising the outer surfaces and the surface of its pores, wherein the surfactant in the carrier has a concentration between ~~0.1~~ 1.0 wt.% and 15 wt.% relative to the weight of the carrier, wherein the particles have a mean particle size between 50 µm and 5000 µm and an at least partly open-pore structure with a mean pore diameter between 1 µm and 200 µm, and wherein the particulate carrier has a loadability with water, determined by bringing it into contact with water, of 10 wt.% to 95 wt.% relative to the total weight of the loaded carrier.

2. (cancelled)

3. (previously presented) The carrier according to Claim 1, wherein the porous polymer substrate is hydrophilised over essentially its entire surface, the entire surface comprising the outer surfaces and the surface of its pores.

4. (cancelled)

5. (previously presented) The carrier according to Claim 1, wherein the surfactant is a non-ionic surfactant selected from the group consisting of fatty acid glycerides, polyglycol ethers, fatty acid glycol esters, fatty acid mono-, di- or triesters of sorbitan, and fatty acid amides.

6. (previously presented) The carrier according to Claim 5, wherein the non-ionic surfactant is a fatty acid glyceride.

7. (previously presented) The carrier according to Claim 5, wherein the non-ionic surfactant has an HLB value higher than 7.

8. (previously presented) The carrier according to Claim 5, wherein the non-ionic surfactant has an HLB value of 10 to 15.

9. (previously presented) The carrier according to Claim 1, wherein the surfactant is an anionic surfactant selected from the group of soaps, alkyl sulfates, alkane sulfonates, alkyl aryl sulfonates or alkyl benzene sulfonates, α-olefin sulfonates, fatty alcohol sulfonates, fatty alcohol ether sulfonates and dialkyl sulfosuccinates.

10. (previously presented) The carrier according to Claim 1, wherein the surfactant is a cationic surfactant selected from the group of quaternary ammonium compounds.

11. (cancelled)

12. (previously presented) The carrier according to Claim 1, wherein the polymer of which the polymer substrate is selected from the group consisting of a polyolefin, a fluoropolymer, a styrene polymer, or a copolymer of these polymers.

13. (previously presented) The carrier according to Claim 1, wherein the carrier possesses essentially the same porous configuration as the porous polymer substrate.

14. (previously presented) The carrier according to Claim 1, wherein the carrier has a porosity in the range between 30 vol.% and 90 vol.%, and the loadability with water between 25 wt.% and 90 wt.% relative to the total weight of the loaded carrier.

15. (previously presented) The carrier according to Claim 1, wherein the particles have a mean pore diameter in the range between 5 µm and 100 µm.

16. (previously presented) The carrier according to Claim 1, wherein the carrier has a characteristic loading time for water of 120 minutes at most.

17. (previously presented) The carrier according to Claim 1, wherein the carrier has a characteristic loading time for water of 90 minutes at most.

18-33. (Withdrawn)

34. (new) The carrier according to Claim 1, wherein the surfactant in the carrier has a concentration between 3.0 wt.% and 15 wt.% relative to the weight of the carrier.